



# New Forests Project

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# Seeds of Hope

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Spring-Summer Update

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## Global Facts: Reforestation and Clean Water

- An estimated 18% of global greenhouse emissions stem from deforestation. This is more than what's produced by the entire global transport sector!
- More than 1 billion people lack access to safe water
- More than 2.6 billion people lack access to basic sanitation

## Making Clean Water a Reality in Central America

Every year, hundreds of representatives from rural water associations and communities throughout Honduras gather together to discuss the common problem of water and sanitation at the community level. The event is called the National Assembly of Water Boards. In contrast to most forums that are typically attended by engineers and academics, this event attracts mainly farmers, plumbers and merchants with little or no formal education; in other words, those most affected by and concerned with water issues in Honduras. This singular event, held annually, has been organized since the mid-1990's by the Honduran Association of Water Boards (AHJASA), our partner association in Honduras.

The New Forests Project has been sponsoring this event since 2003. In 2005, NFP also started bringing in similar associations from other countries in the Central American Region in order to facilitate learning and information-sharing. This has been helpful in bringing visibility and international recognition to AHJASA and our

program.

With the support of the New Forests Project, AHJASA was able to organize the 9<sup>th</sup> annual National Assembly last December in the town of Siguatepeque, located two hours from the capital Tegucigalpa. More than five hundred people from all over Central America and the Caribbean were present to discuss the successes and problems of their water programs. Participants included representatives from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Belize and Dominican Republic

The assembly was a great success! The event was an excellent opportunity for communities to share and discuss common problems as well as to increase recognition of AHJASA as a national organization in Honduras and of ASSA, their sister association in El Salvador. The New Forest Project's participation was vital, not only because of its organizational and financial support, but also because of the technical assistance it was able to offer AHJASA staff members on how to improve existing programs. Many long meetings



The water operator checking the residual chlorine in El Guinope where a disinfecting device was installed last January.

were held between NFP and AHJASA staff to discuss concerns as well as ideas for ex-

### National Assembly objectives:

1. Study how the new laws will impact water boards
  2. Listen to lectures from technology experts,
  3. Exchange knowledge about our successes and experiences at the national level
  4. Discuss our major challenges and alternative solutions for improving waters systems, especially at the rural community level.
- Omar Nunez, Director of AHJASA

pansion. The discussions resulted in a better understanding of what components of the Chlorine Bank Program

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needed more attention and improvement, and what NFP could do to address them. The meetings also led to the revival of the idea of integrating a watershed component into the already existing Chlorine Bank and Circuit Rider programs.

Water and sanitation is still a significant problem in Central America where gastrointestinal illness—including diarrhea, cholera, hepatitis, and typhoid—are the second leading cause of infant mortality. The problem is particularly acute in rural areas where 45-65 percent of the population has no access to clean and potable water, and 80 percent don't have adequate sanitation.



Nora Hernandez, Coordinator of the Chlorine Bank in Honduras, providing training on water disinfection and monitoring in El Paraiso, Honduras

### Strengthening our Partner Organization

NFP has been working with AHJASA, its partner organization in Honduras, since 1995. NFP's provision of financial and material support, technical assistance, and training has proven invaluable for the organization which has seen rapid growth in the last 10 years.

According to AHJASA co-founder, Ediberto Anariva, the organization was first created in 1990 following a meeting of community leaders who expressed con-

cern over the "lack of community organization capable of administering, operating and effectively using existing resources." To address this crisis, Honduras' first association of water boards was created.

Today, with the support of NFP, AHJASA and its sister organization ASSA are impacting over half a million residents in Honduras and several thousand in El Salvador!

### Supporting Local Water Initiatives

#### In-kind contribution of chlorine tablets

NFP was also instrumental in the acquisition and shipment of 25,600lbs. of chlorine tablets donated by PPG, with a market value of US\$33,000. PPG's generous donation has provided seven chlorine networks in El Salvador and Honduras with an estimated three years supply of chlorine! The New Forests Project covered the US\$5,300 delivery costs in

refrigerated containers.

This donation will help improve the health and economic opportunities of an estimated half a million people in 550 neglected communities in rural Honduras and El Salvador. The families, local water boards, and community-based organizations benefiting from the chlorine tablets express their profound gratitude to PPG for their generosity and good will.

### New Forests Project Philosophy: Communities Take Charge

At the New Forests Project, we believe that efforts to create lasting change must begin at the community-level. We provide technical and financial support for projects and facilitate discussions on community needs but ultimate responsibility for planning and implementing the project is given over to the community. We have found that this kind of partnership creates community ownership for development and ensures that

benefits of projects are long-term and enduring.

Although addressing the critical problems of water quality and availability is not easy, communities are taking matters into their own hands.

In the words of Don Martin Gonzalez, an AHJASA board member: "If the community is not involved, the project will collapse. It is absolutely necessary to inform the community, to have them un-

derstand 'this is our reality.' For example, show them the state of their water tank, of their water system, and watershed. If we talk about all of these realities as facts, the people will obtain a level of consciousness and in the end, they will pay the costs. They will eventually assume responsibility. Ultimately, this responsibility is not only to manage their water system, but to manage the community itself."

## Supporting Honduras Partners

### Equipment and technical assistance

In order to strengthen the Chlorine Bank Program in Honduras and El Salvador, the NFP is in the process of equipping our local partner in Honduras, AHJASA, with computers and a truck to help in the delivery of water devices and chlorine products to participating communities. We are also helping AHJASA and our partner in El Salvador, ASSA, to develop a Chlorine Bank Business Plan for the next 5 years. Financial training will be provided to their staff in order to help better guarantee the financial sustainability of the program.



Ecuador: area to be re-forested

## Changes in the World Seed Program

### Decentralizing seed shipments

In an effort to reduce shipping costs and increase access to tree seeds globally, NFP has been working with a seed supplier in India to facilitate seed shipments to larger, more established organizations in developing countries. These organizations will be responsible for distributing the seeds to individuals and smaller organizations working on reforestation. Following this strategy, shipments of tree seeds of up to 5 Kg. each were sent directly from India to eight groups in the following six countries: Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania in Africa and Peru in South America. Unfortunately, two ship-



Uganda: *Ficus natalensis* seedlings

ments to Kenya have encountered problems at customs due to import restrictions imposed by the national government. To work around this problem, NFP has identified a local seed supplier in Kenya that can distribute the seeds to local people and organizations in-country. This new approach will allow NFP to not only bypass the need for import permits but also help support local companies.

We are currently in the process of transferring funds to our partner organization in Kenya who will use them to purchase seeds from this new supplier. If our new strategy proves successful, NFP will have found a way to significantly reduce costs all the while enhancing its positive impact on local organizations!

### Traditional Seed Shipments

In addition to these large shipments, NFP has continued to ship smaller packets of seeds from our US based office in response to email or postal mail seed requests we receive. A total of 55 shipments have been made to 18 countries in the past several

months.

### Making small grants to local organizations

Funds raised for specific reforestation projects during last year's fundraising campaign have been transferred to support the following efforts: reforestation training for local leaders and communities in Nigeria, training of local people on how to reproduce *Ficus natalensis* trees in Uganda, and irrigation of young trees in the Ica valley of Peru. Funds for Honduras have still not been transferred due to administrative transitions in the project.

### Tackling climate change issues at WSP

The World Seed Program has been working on ways to evaluate how our tree species contribute to climate change mitigation in developing countries. A draft position paper has been developed and staff are currently evaluating and moving forward on some of the actions identified during this effort.

## Outreach Update

### *NFP Web page*

The website is also visually more attractive and soon will include graphical data such as maps and charts that will make it easier to read as well as more interactive and user friendly. This improvement has a double purpose: on the one hand it will help our donor's better track where their contributions are being invested, and on the other hand, it will facilitate access to information for our beneficiaries and other interested parties.

The new updated version of our website is now available in English and Spanish, and the French version will be available in the near future. Feel free to visit our new website at: [www.newforestproject.com](http://www.newforestproject.com)

### *Fundraising: mini-proposal*

A mini-proposal to support our Clean Water Initiative has been sent to the New Forests Project's 100 most generous supporters. This proposal outlines our funding and project activity for 2008, and we expect it to provide the funding to un-

derwrite the goals of the Clean Water Initiative's Chlorine Bank for 2008.

The New Forests Project is excited to move forward with the expansion of its Clean Water Initiative in Honduras and El Salvador. The project combines grassroots support and funding with essential training and technical support that has the potential to improve the quality of life of more than 200,000 people in 2008. Your generous support will make this possible!

### For more information feel free to contact us:

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# New Forests Project Seeds of Hope

Address label here

## Electronic Newsletters!

If you would rather receive your quarterly newsletter by email, let us know. Signing up will help NFP cut down on its paper use and lower overhead costs too.

Contact Charles Guedenet at [cguedenet@newforests.org](mailto:cguedenet@newforests.org).

Your information WILL NOT be used to solicit donations or be shared with other organizations.